Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (canceled).

Claim 8 (canceled).

Claim 9 (canceled).

Claim 10 (canceled).

Claim 11 (canceled).

Claim 12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (canceled).

Claim 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (canceled).

Claim 16 (canceled).

Claim 17 (canceled).

Claim 18 (canceled).

Claim 19 (canceled).

Claim 20 (canceled).

Claim 21 (canceled).

Claim 22 (canceled).

Claim 23 (canceled).

Claim 24 (canceled).

Claim 25 (canceled).

Claim 26 (canceled).

Claim 27 (canceled).

Claim 28 (canceled).

Claim 29 (canceled).

30. (New) An apparatus comprising:

a network gateway that includes a Central Processing Unit (CPU),

means for storing a CPU utilization threshold value in said apparatus,

means for receiving incoming calls, each incoming call requiring a particular set of resources including an amount of CPU utilization,

means operable when an incoming call is received for calculating a present CPU utilization value, said CPU utilization value being independent of the resources required by said incoming call,

means operable when an incoming call is received for comparing said present CPU utilization value to said CPU utilization threshold, said comparison being independent of the resources required by said incoming call,

means signaling refusal of said incoming call when said CPU utilization value is above said CPU utilization threshold, said signaling being done independent of the resources required by said incoming call.

31. (New) A method comprising;

establishing a Central Processing Unit (CPU) utilization threshold value for a CPU in a network gateway that receives incoming calls, each incoming call requiring a particular set of resources including an amount of CPU utilization,

when an incoming call is received by said network gateway, taking the following steps independent of the particular set of resources required by said incoming call,

calculating the present CPU utilization value,

comparing said present CPU utilization value to said CPU utilization threshold,

signaling refusal of said incoming call when said CPU utilization value is above said
CPU utilization threshold.

32. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein said CPU utilization threshold is set at a value significantly below the maximum CPU processing capacity of said CPU in order to insure that calls are handled with high voice quality during periods of peak CPU demand.

33. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein said CPU utilization threshold is set to a value equal to seventy percent of said CPU processing capacity.

34. (New) The method of claim 31 including setting a deny flag when the CPU utilization value is above said CPU utilization threshold.

35. (New) The method of claim 34 wherein incoming calls are refused without being answered when said deny flag is set.

36. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein the value of said CPU utilization threshold is stored in non-volatile random access memory (NVRAM).

37. (New) The method of claim 31 including setting a ring flag when a new incoming call is received.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 including calculating a new CPU utilization value when said ring flag is set.

39. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein refusal of an incoming call is signaled by generating a busy signal.

40. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein said gateway detects the ring signal of an incoming call and determines whether or not to refuse the incoming call prior to answering said incoming call.

41. (New) An apparatus comprising,

a network gateway that includes a plurality of resources including a Central Processing Unit (CPU), said network gateway being adapted to receive an incoming call from a caller, said incoming call requiring particular resources including a certain amount of CPU utilization,

said network gateway having a settable CPU utilization threshold,

said CPU being adapted to calculate a present CPU utilization value that indicates the present utilization of said CPU,

a call deny flag that is set when said present CPU utilization value is above said utilization threshold, said deny flag being set independent of the particular resources required by said incoming call, and

means for indicating refusal of said incoming call to said caller without answering the incoming call when said deny flag is set.

42. (New) The apparatus of claim 41 wherein said CPU utilization threshold is set at a value significantly below the maximum CPU processing capacity of said CPU in order to insure that call are handled with high voice quality during periods of peak CPU demand.

43. (New) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said CPU utilization threshold is set to a value equal to seventy percent of said CPU processing capacity.

44. (New) The apparatus of claim 41 including setting a deny flag when the CPU utilization value is above said CPU utilization threshold.

45. (New) The apparatus of claim 44 wherein incoming calls are refused without being answered when said deny flag is set.

46. (New) The apparatus of claim 41 wherein the value of said CPU utilization threshold is stored in non-volatile random access memory (NVRAM).

47. (New) The apparatus of claim 41 including setting a ring flag when a new incoming call is received and including calculating a new CPU utilization value when said ring flag is set.

48. (New) The apparatus of claim 41 wherein said gateway includes means for detecting the ring signal of an incoming call and determines whether or not to refuse the incoming call prior to answering said incoming call.